

Research Assistant



OPPORTUNITY

Where change
gets real.



Reference: 1111-25

Grade: 7

Salary: £36,636 per annum

Contract Type: Fixed Term

Basis: Full or Part-Time

Job description

Job Purpose

We have an exciting opportunity for a research project coordinator to contribute to the success of a large-scale multicentre study to investigate health inequalities affecting individuals of South Asian heritage. The appointee will play a critical role in the development of the West Midlands centre for the Genes&Health research study (<https://www.genesandhealth.org>).

South Asian people have some of the highest rates of heart disease, diabetes, and poor health in the UK. Genes & Health is pioneering research study set up to address health inequalities. To date more than 70,000 volunteers of Bangladeshi or Pakistani heritage have been recruited from East London Genes&Health (2015-), Bradford Genes&Health (2019-), Manchester Genes&Health (2022-) and "West Midlands Genes&Health (2024-) centres. The appointee will join the West Midlands Genes&Health based at Aston University and work to boost the chances of finding new ways to improve the health for these communities in the UK and worldwide (<https://www.genesandhealth.org/about-study>).

We are looking for an enthusiastic and hard-working research project coordinator, ideally with experience of undertaking and/or leading clinical research studies in an academic or NHS environment. The appointee will work closely with the Principal Investigator Professor Eamonn Maher and other members of the Aston Medical School Genes&Health team.

Further Background

Volunteers to the Genes&Health study provide a saliva sample that is used for genetic studies and complete two short questionnaires. Researchers can investigate the relationship between the genetic makeup of the volunteers and their medical history and gain insights into a wide range of medical conditions (<https://www.genesandhealth.org/research>).

The post will involve close collaboration with a wide range of NHS and community stakeholders in order to arrange opportunities for recruitment of participants and promote awareness of the study. To date volunteers to Genes&Health have been recruited through GP practices, community events, University campuses and hospital clinics. Excellent communication and organisational skills are important. Previous experience of clinical research studies involving South Asian communities would be advantageous.

Aston University is positive about flexible working and hybrid working arrangements can be considered.

Main duties and responsibilities

- ▶ Coordinate and undertake recruitment to the Genes&Health study in the West Midlands.
- ▶ Ensure compliance with study protocols, regulatory requirements, and Good Clinical Practice (GCP) guidelines.
- ▶ Schedule and organise West Midlands Genes&Health-related meetings, including investigator meetings and site visits
- ▶ Maintain trial master file and ensure proper documentation and record-keeping.
- ▶ Develop and implement recruitment strategies to identify and enroll eligible participants.
- ▶ Screen and assess potential participants for eligibility according to study protocols.
- ▶ Obtain informed consent from study participants.
- ▶ Ensure availability of recruitment packs to participants and the collection and processing of saliva samples
- ▶ Coordinate and conduct recruitment events

- ▶ Maintain accurate and up-to-date records.
- ▶ Monitor recruitment progress and adjust strategies as needed to meet recruitment targets.
- ▶ Serve as a point of contact for study participants, investigators, and site staff.
- ▶ Liaise with internal and external stakeholders.
- ▶ Communicate study updates and progress to all relevant parties.
- ▶ Address queries and resolve issues related to trial administration and participant recruitment.
- ▶ Ensure accurate data collection, entry, and management according to study protocols.
- ▶ Monitor data quality and perform regular data audits.
- ▶ Assist with data analysis and preparation of study reports.
- ▶ Facilitate in the opening of the genes and health study at primary and secondary NHS sites
- ▶ Ensure samples are stored in the correct storage location, under correct protocol
- ▶ Ensure confidentiality and security of all study data.
- ▶ Participate in audits and inspections by regulatory authorities.
- ▶ Implement corrective actions to address any issues identified during audits or monitoring visits.
- ▶ Provide training and support to study staff and investigators on trial procedures and GCP guidelines.
- ▶ Stay updated with the latest developments in clinical research and attend relevant training sessions and workshops.
- ▶ Participate in training sessions and workshops to enhance own skills and support team development.

Person specification

	Essential	Method of assessment
Education and qualifications	Educated to degree level. Relevant Post Graduate Diploma or equivalent relevant work experience.	Application form
Experience	Knowledge of NHS and/or University research. Track record of undertaking research projects with successful delivery of outputs/targets. Experience collaborating with internal and external stakeholders for project delivery. Ability to monitor progress and developing innovative approaches for research participant recruitment. Experience of GCP training. Strong influencing and negotiation skills within a multidisciplinary environment. Experience of recruitment to clinical research studies	Application form and interview
Aptitude and skills	IT skills, such as MS Office, Email, database maintenance, Email Ability to work under tight deadlines and prioritise competing demands. Strong attention to detail.	Application form and interview

	Desirable	Method of assessment
Education and qualifications	Further qualifications in Health Research or equivalent experience gained in a work environment	Application form
Experience	Recent experience of working in both a university and NHS research setting.	Application form and interview
Aptitude and skills	Fluency in one or more South Asian languages would be advantageous	Application form and interview

Aston University

Aston University is an ambitious institution with the stated aim of being recognized as a research-intensive university of international repute. As a leading university for business and the professions, it maintains strong links with industry, commerce, and the life sciences sector. Aston University's research emphasizes exploitable and impactful world-class research that translates into benefits for the economy and society. Aston Medical School (AMS) is an ambitious, diverse, and urban institution with a strong focus on research-led health education. Aston University excels in research and impact. REF 2021 rates 79% of our research as 'world-leading' or 'internationally excellent'. REF Impact scores high at 74% for reach and significance. Moreover, staff submissions doubled since 2014, boosting 'research power'. Aston was recognized as the Daily Mail University of the Year for Student Success 2025, ranked 2nd in England for social mobility and holds Gold for Teaching Excellence (TEF). Key achievements also include its rising global QS World University Rankings with a significant rise of 165 places in three years, placing it in the top 5% of Universities worldwide. In 2014, Aston University was strategically chosen as the site for a new medical school, we graduated an inaugural cohort of medical doctors in 2023. The Medical School also offers Nursing and Physician Associate programmes. Since its inception, the medical school has been guided by a vision to foster the training of the next generation of clinical academics and was recently awarded NIHR funding to increase the cohort of medical students undertaking intercalated BSc and MSc degrees. Since its inception, AMS has upheld a strong commitment to widening participation and social inclusion through initiatives like the Sir Doug Ellis Pathway to Healthcare. This pathway program engages underprivileged youth across Birmingham and surrounding areas by supporting them to pursue careers in healthcare. To date it has reached over 4,000 students, promoting diversity in medicine. Furthermore, our medical school reserves 20% of seats for Pathway students, creating access for talented individuals from disadvantaged backgrounds. This transformative initiative embodies our mission of empowering youth, breaking down barriers, and cultivating healthcare professionals that represent the diverse communities in which they serve.

AMS (Head of School Professor Eamonn Maher MD FRCP FMedSci) is equipped with state-of-the-art teaching facilities that reflect our commitment to providing high-quality education. These facilities were designed to cater to diverse learning styles and foster an environment that encourages interactive and innovative teaching methodologies. Our campus boasts spacious and technologically advanced lecture halls capable of accommodating large student cohorts. The University is rated Gold in the Times Higher Education Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF). To ensure high quality clinical education and research, the school has appointed a number of Clinical Specialty Leads, who are Consultant Academics drawn from local trusts. In order to bridge the gap between theory and practice, we have established state-of-the-art clinical simulation suites as well as securing NHS England (HEE) funding for Virtual Reality platforms. These facilities allow students to safely practice simulated clinical scenarios, develop clinical skills, enhance decision-making abilities, and gain confidence in managing patient care. At Aston, we also place significant emphasis on utilizing technology to enhance teaching practices. Our academic staff have access to a range of advanced teaching technology, including audio-visual aids and interactive digital resources that allow them to create engaging and immersive learning experiences for our students. Aston University has a powerful mission: to drive research that positively impacts lives. As a public research university, we prioritize collaboration among students, academics, and industry leaders, fostering an inclusive environment where individuals from diverse

backgrounds and disciplines come together in pursuit of knowledge, academic excellence, and a better world. A major and rapidly developing research interest within AMS is *genomic medicine* and the appointment of new academic research staff, the recent establishment of a Masters' programme (MRes and MSc degrees) in Bioinformatics and Genomic Medicine complement and the leadership of the West Midlands Genes&Health initiative are part of ambitious plans to build research strength in this fast-moving area of medical research and practice.

AMS is part of the College of Health and Life Sciences and cross-disciplinary teaching and research and teaching initiatives are encouraged. Aston University recently established a multi-disciplinary Digital Futures Institute (<https://www.aston.ac.uk/research/digital-futures>) to grow research capability and capacity in the Digital Futures space, particularly in the areas of AI in Health, Data Science and Bioinformatics, Gamification and Digital Society. ACAIRA (Aston Centre for Artificial Intelligence Research and Application) focuses on developing trustworthy, ethical and sustainable AI solutions with health being a key area of interest (<https://www.aston.ac.uk/research/eps/acaira>)

Aston is a partner in the NIHR-funded Birmingham Biomedical Research Centre, The West Midlands Innovation Accelerator, Midlands Innovation Health, as well as Birmingham Health Partners. Collaborative relationships with healthcare providers, including Birmingham Women's and Children's Hospital, University Hospitals Birmingham and Sandwell and West Birmingham NHS Trusts, will facilitate innovative research in a range of disciplines. . Our commitment extends to nurturing an inclusive and collaborative research environment. The University was recently awarded the Athena Swan Gold Award (2024). Regular research seminars and workshops will continue, enabling participants to stay informed about cutting-edge research and fostering networking opportunities.

How to apply

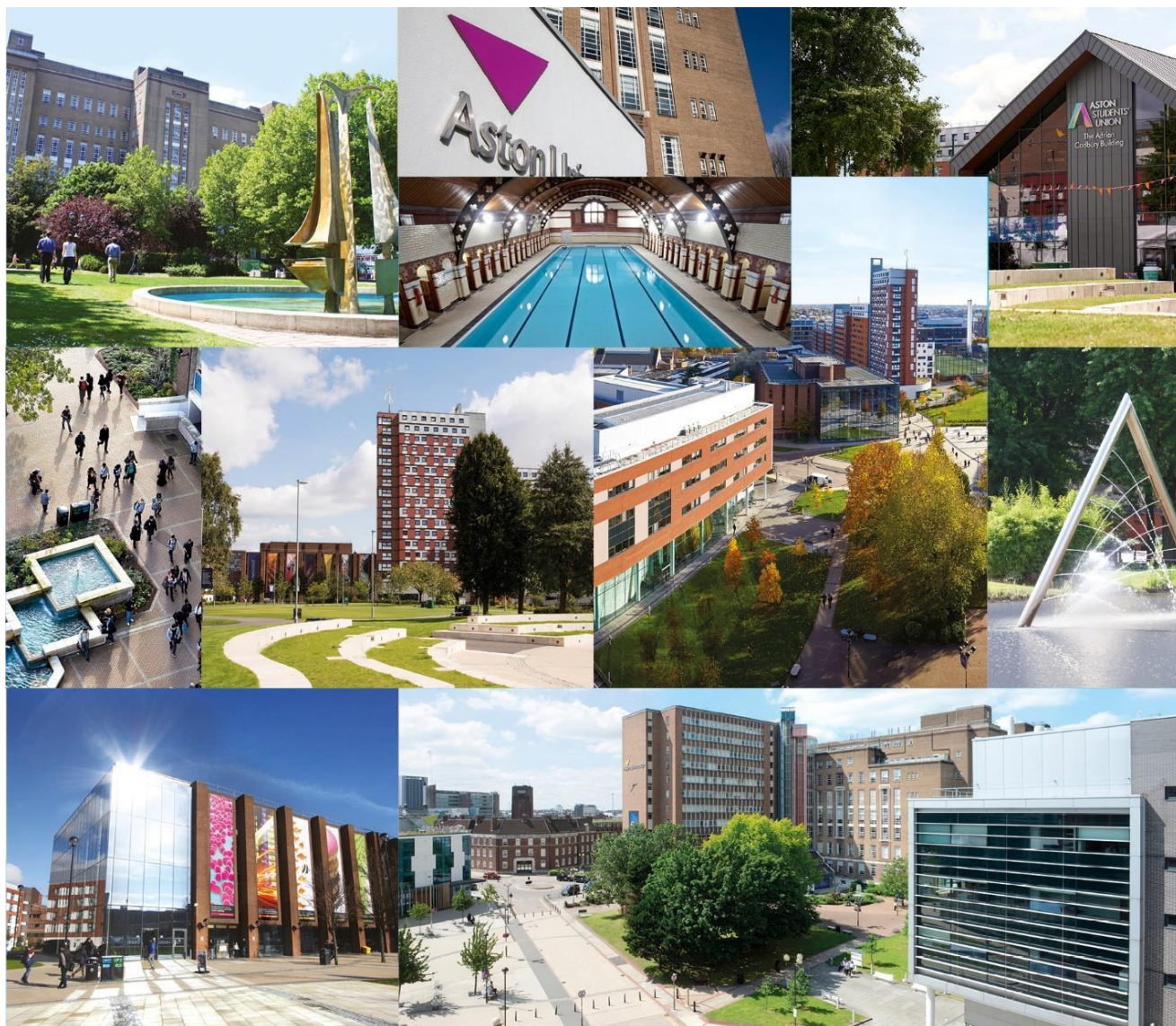
You can apply for this role online via our website <https://www2.aston.ac.uk/staff-public/hr/jobs>.

Applications should be submitted by 23:59 pm on the advertised closing date.

All applicants must complete an application form, along with your CV.

Any CV sent direct to the Recruitment Team and Recruiting Manager will not be accepted.

If you require a manual application form then please contact the Recruitment Team via jobs@aston.ac.uk.



Contact information

Enquiries about the vacancy:

Name: Professor Eamonn Maher

Job Title: Dean of Medicine

Email: e.maher@aston.ac.uk

Enquiries about the application process, shortlisting or interviews:

Recruitment Team via jobs@aston.ac.uk or 0121 204 4500.

Additional information

Visit our website <https://www2.aston.ac.uk/staff-public/hr> for full details of our salary scales and benefits
Aston University staff enjoy

Salary scales: <https://www2.aston.ac.uk/staff-public/hr/payroll-and-pensions/salary-scales/index>

Benefits: [Benefits and Rewards | Aston University](#)

Working in Birmingham: <https://www2.aston.ac.uk/birmingham>

Employment of Ex-Offenders: Under the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974, a person with a criminal record is not required to disclose any spent convictions unless the positions they applying for is listed an exception under the act.

Eligibility to work in the UK: You should ensure that you meet the eligibility requirements, including meeting the [English language standards](#). If you do not meet the eligibility criteria, any application for a work visa would be unsuccessful. Please see UKVI guidance for further information on eligibility, knowledge of English requirements and approved test centres <https://www.gov.uk/tier-2-general>

With the end of free movement for EU/EEA/Swiss nationals from 1 January 2021, the UK's new immigration system applies to all non-UK/Irish nationals who require a visa.

Where an individual is subject to UK immigration control, they will require a visa to work in the UK.

The following individuals do not need a visa for the UK, but do still have to prove their right to work before employment can commence:

- **British Citizens or Irish Nationals**
- **EU/EEA/Swiss nationals with Settled or Pre-settled status under the EU Settlement Scheme**
- **Non-EEA nationals with Indefinite Leave to Remain/Settlement in the UK**

The main routes available for those who need a visa to work in the UK are **Skilled Worker**, **Global Talent** and the **Graduate Route**.

You can find further information about each of these visa routes on our [candidate immigration page](#).

If you will conduct research in your role, you may need to apply for and obtain ATAS clearance before Aston can issue a Certificate of Sponsorship for your visa application. Please see below for further details.

Academic Technology Approval Scheme (ATAS): If you will conduct research in your role and you apply for a Skilled Worker or Temporary Worker GAE visa, you may need to apply for and obtain ATAS clearance before Aston can issue a Certificate of Sponsorship for your visa application.

This process can take at least 6 weeks to process, and Aston will consider this when confirming your expected start date. Processing times will increase between April and September and can longer to complete.

There is no fast-track option available. ATAS certificates will be processed in order of receipt.

You can find more information about ATAS on our [candidate immigration page](#).

Before you start and Right to Work

90-day entry vignette

If you have applied for your visa outside of the UK, you will receive a vignette in your passport which is usually valid for 90 days. Please make sure to travel to the UK within the 'valid from' and 'valid to' dates on this visa. If you entered the UK before or after these dates, you would not 'activate' the visa and you would need to leave and re-enter the country.

You will also receive a decision letter confirming details about your immigration permission and where to collect your Biometric Residence Permit.

Cost of Living - Estate and Letting Agents

There are numerous Estate and Letting Agents in and around Birmingham that can help you find suitable accommodation. The [Midland Landlord Accreditation Scheme](#) provides a list of professional agencies and landlords who have applied with them for accreditation. Whilst accreditation is not a guarantee of quality, it provides some reassurance about the standard of the service they provide.

You can also use property search websites such as [Rightmove](#) or [Zoopla](#).

Equal Opportunities: Aston University promotes equality and diversity in all aspects of its work. We aim to ensure, through our admissions policies for students, and our staff recruitment and selection processes that we encourage applications from all groups represented in the wider community at a local, national and international level.

The University will endeavour not to discriminate unfairly or illegally, directly or indirectly, against student or potential students, staff or potential staff. This commitment applies to all functions of the University and to any stage of an individual's career.

An Equal Opportunities Monitoring Form is included within the application form. Data you provide on the Equal Opportunities Monitoring Form will be included in a general database, for statistical monitoring purposes, enabling the University to monitor the effectiveness of its Policy, Codes of Practice and Guidelines on Equal Opportunities in Employment. Individuals will not be identified by name.

Data Protection: Your personal data will be processed in compliance with the Data Protection Act 2018 and the General Data Protection Regulation ((EU) 2016/679) ("GDPR"). The University's Data Protection Policy and Privacy Notices, including the Job Applicant Privacy Notice can be found at <https://www2.aston.ac.uk/data-protection>. Your application will only be used to inform the selection process, unless you are successful, in which case it will form the basis of your personal record with the University which will be stored in manual and/or electronic files. Information in statistical form on present and former employees is given to appropriate outside bodies.

Full details of our terms and conditions of service and associated policies and procedures are available online at <https://www2.aston.ac.uk/staff-public/hr/policies>

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